DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 199 405 CE 028 142

TITLE Lifelong Learning for Self-Sufficiency. Report of a Miniconference Endorsed by the 1981 White House Conference on Aging (Racine, Wisconsin, November 12-14, 1980).

INSTITUTION Adult Education Association of U.S.A., Washington, D.C.; Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, Washington, D.C.; Institute of Lifetime Learning, Washington, D.C.

SPONS AGENCY American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington, D.C.; Johnson Foundation, Inc., Racine, Wis.

PUB DATE 80

NOTE 28p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Aging (Individuals); Citizen Participation; Daily Living Skills; *Educational Needs; Employer Attitudes; Employment Opportunities; Financial Needs; *Individual Development; *Lifelong Learning; Middle Aged Adults; *Older Adults; Policy Formation; *Public Policy; Self Actualization; Self Help Programs

ABSTRACT

This report synthesizes the discussions and the recommendations of a conference on lifelong learning held at Wingspread (Racine, Wisconsin) in November, 1980. Co-sponsored by the National Retired Teachers Association, the American Association of Retired Persons, the Commission on Education for Aging of the Adult Education Association/USA, the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, and the Population Resource Center, the conference focused on the needs of older adults to continue to learn in order to maintain their self-sufficiency. The report is divided into five sections. Section 1 distinguishes the difference between learning for self-enrichment and learning for self-sufficiency, and explains why the latter is so neccesary in our aging society. Sections 2-5 summarize the discussion of the broad issues of learning for economic sufficiency; learning for coping--practical life skills; learning for community contribution; and learning for life-span development (continued growth). Recommendations of the conference participants are given for each of these topics. A list of participants is appended. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED199405

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Report of a Miniconference endorsed by the
1981 White House Conference on Aging,
held at Wingspread, Racine, Wisconsin,
November 12-14, 1980

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CE 028 142

CO-SPONSORS

Institute of Lifetime Learning of the
National Retired Teachers Association American Association of Retired Persons

Commission on Education for Aging of the Adult Education Association/USA

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education

Population Resource Center

Table of Contents

	PAGE
Background	1
I. Lifelong Learning for Self-Sufficiency	3
Strategies for Strengthening Lifelong Learning for Self-Sufficiency	5
II. Surviving: Learning for Economic Sufficiency	6
Conference Recommendations on Economic Sufficiency	8
III. Coping: Learning for Practical Life Skills	10
Conference Recommendations on Coping	12
IV. Giving: Learning for Community Contribution	13
Conference Recommendations on Giving	15
V. Growing: Learning and Lifespan Development	17
Conference Recommendations on Growing	19
Appendix	
List of Participants	21

Background

The White House Conference on Aging, Presidentially-authorized on October 18, 1978, is designed to draw national attention to the growing number of older Americans, and the policies needed to maximize the resources and meet the needs of this important segment of the population.

In order that specialized issues are not overlooked, the White House Conference has authorized selected mini-conferences. These mini-conferences gave special attention to select issues identified by the Conference staff. One of these issues is lifelong learning.

The decade of the seventies produced a proliferation of material on education and aging. But most of this material focused on education as self-enrichment. During that decade the primary piece of legislation focusing on lifelong learning was Title I-B of the Higher Education Act of 1976, referred to as the Mondale Act. The definition of lifelong learning in the Act was all-encompassing and reflective of the focus on self-enrichment. The Act was never funded, partially due to the political difficulties of funding self-enrichment programs.

Recently, a trend toward programs geared to self-sufficiency has developed in the field of education and aging. This trend is reflected in research, publications and legislation, again through Title I of the Higher Education Act in the 1981 Reauthorization. The new focus of the Act is on adults (including older adults) whose educational needs have been inadequately served. It is hoped that these persons will develop greater self-sufficiency under programs funded through this Act.

Since there has been a shift in educational programming for older adults from self-enrichment to self-sufficiency, there is a need for a more systematic exploration of this area. This examination is of increasing importance, not only to the conferees of the White House Conference on Aging, but also to the 1982 World Assembly on the Elderly.

The mini-conference on Lifelong Learning for Self-Sufficiency was a cooperative effort involving four co-sponsoring organizations:

- Institute of Lifetime Learning of the National Retired Teachers Association-American Association of Retired Persons
- Commission on Education for Aging of the Adult Education Association/USA
- Association for Gerontology in Higher Education
- Population Resource Center

The Johnson Foundation awarded a grant which provided not only the Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center, but also its extremely capable Conference staff. Additional support from the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges made possible the preparation of this report.

The purpose of the mini-conference was to provide a forum for a group of experts, knowledgeable in the fields of education and aging, to identify and discuss key issues in lifelong learning particularly as they relate to an aging society. The ultimate goal of the mini-conference was to develop this report reflecting the policy and program recommendations for consideration by the committees, staff and delegates of the 1981 White House Conference on Aging. A secondary goal was to discuss and disseminate the materials on a broader scale through congressional hearings, presentations at national meetings, and distribution of supplemental papers.

The theme of the mini-conference was "Lifelong Learning for Self-Sufficiency." It considered a new policy thrust for the 1980s: focusing on how education can help older persons solve some of the problems they experience in their later years. The important "multiplier factor" of education was addressed: how can education enable older persons to move into productive roles which will, in turn, have positive economic and social effects on society as a whole.

There were four issues discussed under this broad theme.

- o Surviving: Learning for Economic Sufficiency
- o Coping: Learning for Practical Life Skills
- o Giving: Learning for Community Contribution
- o Growing: Learning and Life-Span Development

To assure that the conference identified the relevant issues, decided on their priority, and formulated careful recommendations, an unusually rigorous discussion-process was followed. The result was that, while still at Wingspread, the conferees had an opportunity to review the initial draft of this report, and make corrections and suggestions for revision. Thus, this document presents a validated synthesis of the conferees' deliberations, conclusions, and recommendations.

The Conference synthesizer and author of this official report was Ronald Gross, author of The New Old: Struggling for Decent Aging and The Lifelong Learner, founder-director of Writers in the Public Interest, and senior consultant to the Office of Adult Learning Services at the College Board in New York City. The Conference administration and coordination was handled by the Institute of Lifetime Learning of the National Retired Teachers Association and the American Association of Retired Persons.

I. LIFELONG LEARNING FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Lifelong learning for self-sufficiency is a necessity, if we seek to accomplish the goals for Older Americans which are the target of the White House Conference on Aging.

Most of the major problems in the lives of older people on which the conference focuses -- economic security, physical and mental health, social well-being, and using older people as a national resource -- can be addressed effectively by learning which gives older people the capacity to deal with them. Education is the neglected necessity in dealing with these basic needs of older people.

But our entire system of education in America has always been centered on children and youth. Lifelong learning, except for a few triumphant examples such as the assimilation of immigrants, agricultural extension, and the public library system, has been an afterthought.

Now, however, with this nation very rapidly aging in its demographic profile, it is time to rectify what has become an imbalance. Lifelong learning for adults, and particularly for those older Americans who have so generously encouraged and funded the education of succeeding, younger generations, now deserves and needs increased attention, cultivation, and support.

Much has already been accomplished. The rates of participation of older adults in education have increased significantly. Many institutions have entered the field with a wide range of useful offerings. Attention has begun to be paid by government at the federal, state, and local level; by foundations and non-profit associations; by colleges, community colleges, and universities; by business and industry; and by other sectors of our society.

Moreover, research and experimentation now enable us to say with complete assurance that the myth that "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" is false and dangerous. Older people can learn effectively, enjoyably, and profitably.

Yet despite this progress, there is still far to go -- which is the reason for this paper. The older adults who benefit from all the new programs tend to be those who are already advantaged, educationally and economically. The vast majority of those most in need, are still unreached. Much of the education offered for older people is not relevant as it should be to their most pressing needs. Too much of it is conveyed in traditional forms, through conventional teaching in a classroom, rather than in a diversity of modes, formats, and styles.

In short, lifelong learning for older adults is a demonstrable reality today. But there is too little, it reaches too few of those who need it the most, and it is often too traditional in content and method.

Obviously, by lifelong learning we mean education in a new sense -- but one that is very close to each of our personal experiences. We do not mean merely the study of academic subjects in a classroom. We do not mean following a set curriculum of a school or college simply to obtain a degree. We do not mean being taught as a recreational activity to absorb too much leisure time.

Rather, we propose learning experiences that strengthen, enlarge, and enhance older persons' capacities to deal with the major problems of their lives, individually and in concert with others. The kinds of education we believe so essential include:

- Surviving -- learning for economic sufficiency (Sec. II)
- Coping -- learning for practical life skills (Sec. III)
- Giving -- learning for community contribution (Sec. IV)
- Growing -- learning for becoming a fuller human being (Sec. V)

How would such education help older Americans solve some of their major problems?

- Learning for economic sufficiency -- for finding satisfactory employment -- would give older people the option to augment their income, enhance their feeling of well-being, and contribute to society. Successful job-hunting and career development at any age require the learned abilities to assess and present one's capacities developed over a lifetime, to find and explore the full range of ways to earn money, to work effectively in new environments, and to acquire new marketable skills.

- Learning of practical life skills or restructuring of coping skills developed over a lifetime, would enable older persons to cope flexibly and resourcefully with their daily problems. Many older adults need better information and referrals to educational opportunities, awareness of the values of further education, peer counseling, basic education, and a feeling that they can obtain for themselves the learning they require.

- Learning for community participation could empower older people to help the nation cope with its mounting social and economic problems, while giving them a more creative role in society. They could identify problems, marshall resources to solve them, make institutions more responsive to human needs, and join with others in collective action

- Learning for becoming a fuller human being could give older Americans an authentic opportunity to make their later years the capstone of their lives, and proclaim to the rest of us why that period of life deserves respect. Older people would derive immense personal satisfaction if liberated for creative engagement with others.

Clearly, these are not the kinds of learning which go on only in schools and colleges. They can, do, and should go on in community organizations, senior centers, churches, libraries, homes, business offices and industrial plants. Our focus is not on finding new roles for formal educational institutions, per se, though such institutions have a crucial role to play in providing the opportunities we seek. Our focus is on the basic needs of older Americans, and how those needs might best be met through learning, wherever it occurs, by whomever it is facilitated, and under whatever auspices.

STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING LIFELONG LEARNING FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Nine basic strategies were recommended by conference work-groups addressing quite different issues, suggesting that together those strategies might constitute the basis for an overall program to strengthen lifelong learning for self-sufficiency. Those nine strategies were:

- Empower older people themselves to obtain better responsiveness from institutions, and to meet their own needs, wherever possible. Self-help, peer group counseling, advocacy efforts, and other means were proposed by which needs could be met by elders themselves. The capacity of elders to effect constructive change might well improve the quality of life for all Americans.

- Use existing institutions, programs, and resources to provide needed services and support, wherever possible. Simply by removing barriers to older peoples' participation in existing programs, for example, many could be served in useful ways. Improved coordination, cooperation, collaboration, and access could also make valuable experiences broadly available.

- Provide information, counseling and support services. Older people need help in making the best use of available opportunities, and in developing new ones. Most work-groups called for various kinds of services to provide the knowledge, understanding, and skills they need.

- Change negative laws, policies, regulations, or practices. Most work-groups cited examples of current provisions which act against the best interests of older people, ranging from government regulations on taxation and student aid, to some personnel policies in private industry.

- Begin earlier. Several of the groups noted the need to start in mid-life and even earlier, to prepare individuals for competent and constructive aging. Pre-retirement planning must begin at mid-career, for example, and positive images of the old should be a part of the school and college curriculum.

- Target some programs to meet the needs of the disadvantaged. Throughout the discussion there was continued emphasis on finding ways to help those with special or unmet needs. In some areas, such as job retraining, women were considered in need of special attention; in others, the poor or minority groups.

- Increase public understanding of the problems and potentialities of older people. Virtually every group noted the need for such heightened awareness, in the population at large, as well as among key professionals and practitioners. Both knowledge and understanding must be disseminated, the conferees urged, and many means were recommended, from the media to professional training programs.

- Conduct relevant research. New knowledge and understanding are needed to discover better ways to meet high-priority needs or solve pressing problems. Most groups acknowledged that much remains to be investigated and developed in this field.

- Alleviate economic barriers to learning for self-sufficiency. Most of the groups recommended some subventions to enable older people to become more self-sufficient. Government aid was generally seen as necessary in those areas where other means cannot assure that those most in need will receive the services they require.

II. SURVIVING: Learning for Economic Sufficiency

Of the four conference themes, this one reflects most sharply the changed economic and social climate in the U.S. since the 1971 White House Conference. Clearly, our new national awareness of economic constraints commands that we pay greater attention to the education and re-education of older persons for employment, as documented in the background paper by Pauline Ragan, Director of the National Policy Center on Employment and Retirement at the University of Southern California.

This area has been the most neglected in prior discussions of education for older persons. Yet work's central role in the lives of Americans should have suggested that even for older people, the option to work is important. As Dr. Ragan put it with admirable balance: "The intent is not to promote mandatory employment instead of mandatory retirement. Rather, the key is in promoting flexibility of the system so that older persons will have real options for work or retirement."

The demographic and economic pressures which compel attention to preparing older adults for employment are convincing:

- the cost of paying for retirement is becoming more severe because of the greater numbers of older people who retire earlier and live longer.

- the individual older person needs to be in the labor force longer because of his or her lengthened life expectancy and and the effect of inflation on retirement income.

- many employers need new older workers or need to retain current workers beyond the usual time of retirement.

- many older people would prefer to continue to work because of their attitudes, values, and sense of what's worth doing in life.

In short, as Dr. Ragan concluded, "economic and demographic trends make it costlier to the nation, the employer, and the individual to continue the current pattern of early and full retirement." The revitalization of the American economy could benefit significantly from the input of older workers, just as it should benefit sharply from the infusion of cadres of women and minorities. In all these cases, however, the pay-off hinges on the adequate education of these new workers to the point where they are maximally productive.

Women re-entering the work-force call for special attention, Dr. Ragan noted sharply, and more than technical training is required to equip them. Confidence-building, networking, and other attitudes and skills need to be developed.

The possible sources of education for older people include formal educational institutions, labor organizations, employers, and federal government programs. Here, Dr. Ragan concluded that the major opportunity for older workers to obtain the educational services they need, is through employers.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ECONOMIC SUFFICIENCY

- Incentives for the Private Sector

1. A comprehensive study should be undertaken by appropriate governmental agencies and the private sector to determine the ways in which the private sector can be encouraged to provide such training and education, and the advantages and disadvantages of each, as well as the costs.

2. The Federal and State governments should eliminate taxes imposed on employees on the basis of tuition benefits granted by employers.

3. Additionally, tax incentives for employers based on specific education and training programs should be developed to encourage training of older workers which would otherwise not be provided.

- Counseling and Support Services for Life Planning

4. Cooperative efforts should be encouraged among government, industry, institutions of higher education, unions, and community schools, to provide needed counseling and support services.

5. Information should be gathered and made available locally to older people about the job market. Data collection systems should be improved, to identify emerging employment needs and employment desires of older workers.

6. Training in counseling techniques should be provided. Services should be available to enhance job-finding skills.

7. Senior executives should be available on a 'loan basis' to gather information on local labor markets.

8. The special needs of older women and the disadvantaged should be recognized in the development of counseling programs.

9. Technical assistance should be provided to employers on how best to respond to the needs of older employees for encouragement, guidance, and support.

- Education for Older Adults for New Jobs and/or Job Retention

10. A "Senior Job Corp" should be established.

11. Cooperative endeavors should be encouraged between business/industry and educational or community organizations with emphasis on serving older adults.

12. Education should be provided for the middle-age period of workers' careers.

13. A percentage of each state's grant under the Adult Education Act should be set aside for upgrading the education of older workers. CETA legislation and guidelines for the Vocational Education Act's state-administered funds should be revised to reflect a similar focus.

14. Information about programs that have been successful in extending basic education to older adults should be disseminated.

15. Employers should be encouraged to provide released time so that qualified employees can take advantage of these basic educational services.

o Public Advocacy About the Economic Problems of Older Workers

16. A public information program should be undertaken to inform older people about issues related to public policy on work and retirement. Special attention should focus on the vulnerability of the Social Security system and the danger of reduced entitlements, which could coerce older workers to remain in the labor force beyond their desire or capacity to do so.

17. Information should be disseminated to the general public on these issues, engaging the mass media to reach the largest possible audience in a collaborative effort among the public and private sectors, foundations, unions, institutions of higher learning, and community agencies.

o Greater Intergenerational Understanding and Cooperation in the Workplace

18. A comprehensive study of the issues related to intergenerational work should be undertaken.

19. The use of older workers should be emphasized, where appropriate, to help train younger workers.

20. Intergenerational workshops should be offered, in which tensions can be candidly discussed in order to change behavior positively.

21. Training sessions for management on dealing with an older workforce should be provided.

(section continues)

- Responsive Education-Work Policies Within the Private Sector

22. Pre-retirement seminars should be encouraged for all middle-aged and older workers.

23. Personnel policies which encourage job step-down as a retention policy should be explored.

24. Phased retirement should be considered.

III. COPING: Learning for Practical Life Skills

We Americans are pre-occupied with acquiring coping skills. "How-to" books now constitute a large proportion of all books published and sold in the United States every year, and articles on such subjects have become the staple of every major consumer magazine.

But superficially understood and practiced, coping skills can conduce to defeat rather than success. In his background paper, David Demko, Director of Aging and Retirement Education at Delta College, University Center, Michigan, posed the problem: "What's the use in educating the aged to their greatest potential within a society that won't permit them to self-actualize?"

This question -- what is truly "practical?" -- has always been a difficult one in American culture. From Emerson's essay on Self-Reliance to the present day, the question has haunted us: What are the limits of individualism -- the degree to which the individual can indeed create his or her own success, regardless of the societal constraints?

Demko helpfully identified the major such barriers: the economic barrier, the mobility barrier, psychological barriers, and social barriers. He described what a congenial learning environment would be for older people: "Emphasis must be placed on eliminating the older adult's stereotyped perception of education as they experienced it in their youth. Educational programs such as course offerings and community services should be practical and informative so that the older learner can apply the information to his day-to-day living situation. Programs should utilize informal group discussion techniques in order to allow the older learner to participate as both a receiver of information and provider of information through sharing of meaningful past life experiences. Programs should be supportive in nature and stress the individual's capacity for self-help by showing how new information can be used in conjunction with the personal resources already possessed by the older adult. Programs should be flexible in length in order to allow the older learner to sample coursework before making a commitment for an entire semester. Weekend programs and short term residential institutes have proved to be quite popular as a sampling tool for the older population."

With such environments, Demko goes on to recommend, there is need to go beyond the usual array of coping skills. "The adult's generalizable coping skills must be enhanced so that he/she becomes an 'adaptor' to changes of all sorts. For example...successful adaptation to life crises (has been found) to be linked to the individual's ability to maintain a coherent and consistent self-image. Examples of generalizable coping skills are personal growth, assertion training, decision-making skills, and so forth...Preventive education, as currently practiced, is well received by the elderly since it assists them in coping with specific problems of everyday living. However, in addition to present efforts, educators should attend to the provision of generalizable coping skills which will render the older adult to be an 'adaptor' of all sorts. The greater issues lie beyond topical concerns."

"The Aging Education Continuum" is Dr. Demko's useful construct to visualize the range of offerings and services needed by older adults. "It ranges from better access to existing services, education for the elderly, education about the elderly, and the development of new knowledge. Services heretofore considered as 'outside the domain of education' may of necessity become part of conventional practice."

Demko calls for new strategies for intervention, alternate models for empowering older adults, models which exist but are not widely used. These strategies would be more proactive and diverse, taking us far from the prevailing norm of classroom instruction in leisure-oriented subjects.

Education, then, has a dual role in the development of coping skills: improvement of basic skills associated with functional competency, and expansion of more generalized skills for total fitness.

There is a clear need for educational services to bolster specific skills such as literacy and computation abilities which permit older Americans to function effectively in society, as well as topical educational programs focusing on health, retirement planning, etc. However, there are dangers to a highly specialized, categorical approach to the educational needs of the elderly. A more comprehensive, holistic consideration of their problems is needed to balance specific and generalizable skills.

In addressing this dual nature of educational coping services, three major principles were affirmed by the conferees:

First, particularly during a time of scarce resources, a high priority should be placed on the utilization of existing services to meet the coping needs of older Americans through the removal of barriers, and expansion of access to educational opportunities. These barriers include financial obstacles, lack of information and transportation, and structural barriers.

Secondly, self-help strategies should be used in educational coping services. Participation of the elderly in program planning, development and implementation is important.

Finally, there is a need for long-range responses to coping problems through the development of preventive coping services, especially pre-retirement education and life planning initiatives to prepare younger Americans for the problems associated with the aging process.

We know too little about the real coping needs of older Americans. There is a pressing need for the development of new knowledge through research and development efforts as well as the extension of existing models for the provision of generalizable coping skills.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON COPING

o Empowerment Strategies

1. Efforts to meet the educational needs of the elderly should include providing them with the skills to identify their needs and to organize political and social pressure to attain them. These efforts should be encouraged at the local level through a range of community institutions.

o Removal of Barriers and Expansion of Access

2. Communications programs should convey to older adults the range of possibilities to participate in continuing education through such means as Elderhostel, peer counseling, and information and utilization of the "aging network."

3. Older adults should be reached with educational programs in their homes, via electronic media and other innovative techniques, by the public (Public Broadcasting Service and others) and private sectors.

4. Comprehensive information/referral programs for the elderly and their families should be instituted in every community.

5. Research should be conducted on structural barriers which impede older persons' educational opportunities, such as inappropriate curricula, scheduling, and teaching methods.

o Coping for Total Fitness

6. Since many older people have multiple problems, it is important that educational coping programs take a holistic approach.

7. Educators must raise their awareness, as well as the awareness of both older adults and service providers, about the need for integration and coordination of services.

- Generalized Coping Skills

8. Research is needed to develop new knowledge about generalized coping skills, such as decision-making, problem-solving, etc.

9. Existing models which provide generalized coping skills should be disseminated and replicated.

- Preventive Coping

10. Employers, both private and public, and unions should actively recruit their employees and provide a broad range of life planning programs to them long before retirement. These programs should include spouses.

- Functional Competency

11. Incentives should be provided to encourage educational institutions (including libraries, community programs, etc.) to offer basic education for older adults and to remove all barriers which prevent adults from achieving basic skills.

12. Programs for older adults designed to impart specific coping skills should utilize peer group strategies, as do models in tax education, mental health, and widowhood counselling.

- Public Subsidy

13. Education for older adults, broadly conceived to include both traditional and non-traditional forms, should be subsidized by the public sector on an on-going basis (as is education for youth), including student financial aid.

IV. GIVING: Learning for Community Contribution

Older Americans have begun to take new roles in their communities and in our society -- roles which reveal how much they have to offer and how well they can learn and teach the rest of us. Most of these activities are locally conceived and conducted, in true grass-roots fashion. Helen Kelley, Director of Older Americans Volunteer Programs at ACTION, evoked them in her background paper, and indicated why they are of such value to the individuals involved, and to the communities they serve: "It is neither possible nor necessary to catalog the myriad ways in which older people are learning to gain and maintain charge of the conditions of their lives. Neither will it be possible to identify and even less to institutionalize all the ways and places in which they are learning what they need to know to accomplish this control. Much of it is from memory released by leisure. Most of it is learned informally: a conversation in the local bar; a visit to an old friend in a nursing home; observing that their grandchildren or

great grandchildren can't read well; getting a notice that their apartment is going condo or that the rent is going up by 75%; receiving the utility bill; hearing an astute editorial on TV or radio; attending, perhaps out of boredom, a lecture in the church or union hall or senior center which suggested forcibly that there were ways to take charge that might benefit everyone -- or at least, almost everyone."

The federal government has supported some highly successful nationwide efforts along these lines. VISTA (now administered by ACTION), in its fifteen years of existence, has supported among other things the work of volunteers over 55 years of age, who have created hundreds of self-help organizations which advocate for improved services; establish craft, farm and consumer cooperatives; form tenant associations; create nursing home ombudsman programs; assure access for the handicapped to benefits due them; and provide day care to the children of the poor. ACTION also administers the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, the Foster Grandparent Program and the Senior Companion Program.

On the basis of what has been accomplished in these programs and the many more conducted without public subvention, Kelley observed that "the resources for lifelong learning exist in every school house, college and university; in every church and temple; in every legislative hall no matter how small or how large; in every radio and television station; in every library, hospital or clinic; in non-profit organizations literally too numerous even to list. Each of them is, in some sense, in the public domain, either by reason of explicit law or tax support or tax exemption. If some of them are not hospitable or inviting, there are already ways of helping them to be more responsive."

Kelley asserted the need for leadership and support if such activities are to further flourish: "Since we live in a managed society, it is foolhardy to expect that older people will step up individually and hawk their wares, so to speak. Institutions of leadership and support are needed if we are to institutionalize healthier and self-fulfilling expectations of what it means to be older. Fortunately, a number of such institutions and movements already exist."

However, she concluded that it may be premature or inadvisable to "wrap public policy" around these developments. "A lifetime of surviving, coping and growing is, in itself, a profound learning experience. Perhaps we shouldn't try to institutionalize it or wrap public policy around it. The networks of service and advocacy which are being formed by and on behalf of older people may not yet, I fear, be strong enough to bear the weight of a public policy. Let their thousand flowers bloom."

17

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON GIVING

- o Laws, procedures and policies which discourage participation by elders.

1. IRS regulations currently penalize non-job-related retraining for later careers. They should be changed to encourage education providing opportunities for giving by elders.

2. Personnel regulations in the public and private sectors, and union-management contracts, often discourage individuals from continuing their development. Such regulations should instead encourage personal and professional growth through provision of educational leaves or job sharing by elders.

3. Federal and state student loans and grants should be extended to older students.

4. State legislatures should initiate programs of reimbursement or direct funding to public secondary schools, colleges, and universities that offer continuing career training for elders, and such students should be included in computing FTEs (full-time equivalent students).

5. Age discrimination policies in educational institutions and agencies should be identified and eliminated.

6. Demonstration projects to design, test, and disseminate selected retraining programs should be funded by government or private foundations, or by business or industry.

7. Educational institutions should relate to the total learning life of adults, not just the 18-22 age group.

8. Federally-funded Education Opportunity Centers should receive expanded funding.

9. Education in non-traditional settings and subjects should be expanded

- o Attitudes about the potential of the elderly to contribute to our society

10. Unions and trade associations should be encouraged to offer their retirees opportunities for continued involvement.

11. Media communicators should be educated to change their attitudes about the potential of the elderly, and help influence public perceptions of the elderly.

12. General education at all levels should include the positive aspects of aging and the potential contributions of older persons.

13. The continuing education of practitioneers and professionals should include the contributory roles of older people.

14. Inter-generational programs on the local level should be developed, including models that stress the positive potential of older persons as contributors to our society.

15. Attitudinal research to identify successful approaches to creating a more positive image of the potential role of the elderly should be encouraged.

o Receptivity of institutional systems to contributions of older persons

16. Governance structures and policies of public and private organizations should be reshaped to affirmatively involve older citizens (e.g. boards, committees, planning bodies, etc.)

17. Management planning and policy within organizations should facilitate on-going contributions of older personnel (e.g. job restructuring; flexible work schedules; volunteer board, committee or consultant roles, to reflect continuing interest and fields of expertise supported by continuing education).

18. Advocacy efforts utilizing time, energy and talents of older persons, addressed at social change goals, should be recognized as a legitimate special political interest encouraged as beneficial to an aging society.

19. In-service training and education programs should sensitize professionals to the potential contributions of older persons.

20. Educational programs for administrators and managers, regarding age discrimination laws and issues, should be encouraged and supported.

21. As public responsibilities shift to the private sector, the resources of older persons must be utilized.

o Legitimation of the contributions of older volunteers

22. ACTION'S Older Americans Volunteer Programs, which have demonstrated the will and ability of older people to contribute significant service in their communities, should be expanded.

23. Current policies and practices of volunteer-using agencies, in respect to their utilization of older people, should be rigorously reappraised.

24. Training for volunteer work, and participation in it, should be considered as legitimate experience for older persons.

o Contributions/Giving from Special Groups of Older Persons

25. Grass-roots, self-help, volunteer, and culturally relevant programs should be identified and provided with technical assistance and financial support in order to expand their opportunity to contribute to the community.

26. Training opportunities should be provided at the community level to assist these special groups to understand the financial and social structure of their communities, to help them make a more significant contribution.

27. Media projects and model or demonstration programs should be supported and implemented, which reflect the contributive role of these special groups.

28. Economic counterparts to tax shelters for the rich should be available to the poor to encourage on-going learning and giving.

29. Community recognition and rewards systems and programs should be financed and encouraged at the local level to recognize the contributions from special groups.

Note: A dissenting viewpoint on the issue of volunteerism was expressed by Dean Robert Lewis Piper of Southeastern Massachusetts University. Urging more careful examination of the whole concept of volunteerism, Dean Piper pointed out that it is closely associated with the aristocratic idea of noblesse oblige, and is therefore based on a class structure; that it is becoming less tenable in an economic system offering wider ranges of employment to women, who have typically been the volunteers in American society; and finally that the concept is tainted with a racial bias since it has been dominated by Anglo Saxons. Therefore, Dean Piper concluded, a reexamination might well lead to eliminating this whole area from the consideration of elderly self-sufficiency. This viewpoint was strongly contested by other participants who endorsed volunteerism for older people.

V. GROWING: Learning and Lifespan Development

Is learning per se, as a good in itself, a legitimate concern of public policy in a democracy?

The distinguished American historian Howard Mumford Jones, reflecting on the Declaration of Independence's affirmation of man's right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," points out that "the only durable meaning of 'life' in this context is one's inner life, the only use of 'liberty' is long-run freedom to enrich that inner life, and the only possible meaning of happiness lies in some less transient satisfaction than eating and drinking, getting and spending, and being amused."

Applied to learning by older adults, this conviction suggests that learning for personal growth towards the end of life is a good in itself. Older people would seem to both need and deserve such learning. The seers of classical Greece thought that the proper time to study some of the most profound and humanly important subjects was not in youth, when one lacks experience with the world and knowledge of life, but in later maturity. They believed that the most serious literature, the deepest philosophy, the most intricate political science, the subtlest explorations of oneself, were best undertaken by mature people.

Moreover, the fruits of such learning -- described as "changes in consciousness" in the background paper by Dr. Harry Moody, Director of the National Policy Study Center on Education, Leisure, and Continuing Opportunities (National Council on Aging) -- can turn out to have momentous practical consequences. While affirming that such growth is a good in itself and entirely justifiable for that reason, Moody pointed out that older people will be far better able to survive, to cope, and to give if they have benefitted from some of the values of such learning. They would be liberated from stereotypes that limit their view of what they could accomplish. They would understand far better the realities of other people and of the society. They would be able to articulate values and to act on them. Moody wrote: "When I speak of changing one's consciousness, I mean a reorientation of thinking that has immediate practical results for all my transactions with the world. 'Growing' is not the enjoyment of special states of consciousness but the mobilization of consciousness to see the world in a new way and then to act on the basis of a new way of seeing. Understood in this way, changing consciousness is the most practical step one can take.

I would emphasize, too, that this dimension of "growing" is precisely what underlies the ultimate effectiveness of lifelong learning in each of the other three domains: surviving, coping, and giving. Let me make this point clear by looking at the example of learning for economic survival. In lifelong learning for economic survival, what is needed is a shift of consciousness on the part of those older workers who seek employment in the labor market. Books such as What Color is Your Parachute? along with training programs for displaced homemakers all send the same message: Don't accept the negative self-image that whispers that you haven't got any skills. Most people through their life experience pick up any number of skills and knowledge that isn't sorted into categories and certified by labels and credentials. Part of self-sufficiency is the discovery that my life experience itself is a rich source of prior learning that can be adapted to new experiences and new demands, provided that I can learn to think of my skills and experience in a new way.

Both as a good in itself, then, and as the most practical kind of learning, Moody urged the support of opportunities here, by public and private policy. But he stressed that future funding should be sought not merely to provide more of what we already have, but to exert leadership, promote innovation, and encourage

the kind of learning that goes deepest and makes the most ultimate difference in the quality of peoples' lives.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON GROWING

- Public acceptance of the personal and social value of lifelong learning for growth

  1. Research and demonstrations should be undertaken which will indicate the tangible benefit of self-actualization activities for older persons.

  2. Negative expectations concerning older persons' abilities to continue to grow and develop must be overcome, and a positive view of aging should be fostered through legislation, social programs, media, and public information channels.

  3. Older adults should be provided opportunities to become politically literate in the techniques of obtaining and utilizing education for growth.

- Funds to underwrite lifelong learning

  4. A range of public, private, and voluntary funding streams, including self-provision, employer tuition remission toward preretirement education, tax-deductions for lifelong learning or a voucher system good for continuing education opportunities, should be employed in various combinations to encourage lifelong learning experiences.

- Self-directed lifelong learning

  5. The educational establishment should develop alternatives which encourage self-directed learning experiences throughout individuals' lifespans. Self-help, peer association and training, and self-actualization should be encouraged as means to self-concept improvement and involvement.

  6. The educational establishment should recognize the fact that older persons' learning ability and motivation to learn are affected by their past educational experiences and that such motivation is potentially an educable disposition; therefore, educational programs should include orientation to such awareness and systematic effort to generate motivation to continue educational pursuit throughout life.

- Lifespan education

  7. Education about aging, for aging, and the need for lifelong learning to deal with critical life issues should be made an integral part of the school curriculum.

8. Because of the lack of preparedness of many professionals to deal with their own adulthood and with that of the persons whom they serve, curricula for professionals (for example, educators, service providers, clergy) should include knowledge about normal adult development and about the skills necessary for helping adults negotiate normal life changes.

o Diffusion of innovation, utilization and dissemination

9. A central information agency should set up a clearinghouse and data base for information on lifelong learning, perhaps through some appropriate existing agency with a relevant mission.

10. Results of basic and applied research and demonstration projects on adult lifespan development and aging should be disseminated at national and local levels.

11. Regional and local units on aging should include lifelong learning projects in their area plans.

o Meeting the needs of the least advantaged

12. This group should be targeted in all educational legislation and regulations.

13. The private sector, business and industry should be encouraged to serve the least advantaged.

14. Maximum and effective exploitation of the expanding telecommunications technology should be utilized as the means of disseminating information and education for less mobile constituents.

15. A system of elders' advocates should be established through the voluntary sector to identify the least-advantaged older persons in each community.

List of Participants

Jeanne B. Aronson
Past Director
Older Americans Program
American Association of
Community and Junior
Colleges
One Dupont Circle, Suite 410
Washington, D.C.

Dorothy M. Beatty
Member, Board of Directors
National Retired Teachers
Association
843 South 47th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68510

Christopher Bolton
Assistant Professor
Aging Studies Section
University of Nebraska
Medical Center
42nd and Dewey Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68510

Samuel C. Brightman
Editor
Adult and Continuing Education
Today
Consultant
National Council of Senior
Citizens
1511 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Joseph A. Britton
Professor of Human Development
and Chair
Gerontology Center
Pennsylvania State University
President
Association of Gerontology in
Higher Education
University Park, Pennsylvania
16802

Brian Calhoun
President
Wisconsin Association for
Adult and Continuing
Education
Gateway Technical Institute
1001 South Main Street
Racine, Wisconsin 53403

Genevieve M. Casey
Professor of Library Science
Wayne State University
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Kathleen A. Chelsvig
Associate Head
Institute of Lifetime Learning
National Retired Teachers Associa-
tion-American Association of
Retired Persons
1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20049

Pamela Christoffel
Research and Development
Associate
The College Board
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Jean Coleman
Director
Office of Library Outreach
Services
American Library Association
50 East Huron
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Donald Crawford
Program Analyst
White House Conference on Aging
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Trudy Cross
Consultant on Aging
The Mott Foundation
500 Mott Foundation Building
Flint, Michigan 48502

Delores A. Davis-Wong
Executive Director
National Center on the Black Aged, Inc.
1424 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

David Demko
Director
Aging and Retirement Education
Delta College
University Center,Michigan 48710

Lowell R. Eklund
National Advisory Council on Continuing Education
Dean, Division of Continuing Education
Oakland University
Meadowbrook Hall
Rochester, Michigan 48063

Donald R. Fronzaglia
Director
Human Resource Development
Polaroid Corporation
750 Main Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dale Gibson
President
South Oklahoma City Junior College
7777 South May
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73159

Rosalie Gilford
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
California State University
Fullerton, California 92634

Arnold Glassman
Manager of Benefits, Policies and Communication
Atlantic Richfield Company
515 South Flower Street
Los Angeles, California 90071

Jinny Goldstein
Associate Director
Adult Learning Programming
Public Broadcasting Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Philip Gordon
Executive Director
Academy of Independent Scholars
970 Aurora
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Ronald Gross
Senior Consultant
Office of Adult Learning Service
The College Board
17 Myrtle Drive
Great Neck, New York 11021

Josephine Gustafson
Secretary
American Association of Retired Persons
500 14th Street
Townsedge Apartment #28
Devils Lake, North Dakota 58301

William J. Hanna
Director
Division of Services for the Aging
Colorado Department of Social Services
1575 Sherman Street, Room #503
Denver, Colorado 80203

Jon Hendricks
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology
University of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky 40506

William J. Hilton
Director
Lifelong Learning Project
Education Commission of the States
1860 Lincoln Street
Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80295

Donald H. Hoffman
Director
Council on Aging
Donovan Scholars Program
University of Kentucky
Ligon House
Lexington, Kentucky 40506

Irwin Jahns
Professor of Adult Education/Educational Gerontology
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306

Clifford M. Johnson
Legislative Assistant to Representative William R. Ratchford (D-CT)
437 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Olaf J. Kaasa
President
American Association of Retired Persons
11720 West Briar Lane
Minnetonka, Minnesota 55443

Helen Kelley
Director
Older Americans Volunteer Programs
ACTION
1615 Q Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

Paul A. Kerschner
Associate Director
National Retired Teachers Association-American Association of Retired Persons
1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20049

Jacques O. Lebel
Immediate Past Chairperson
Commission on Education for Aging of the Adult Education Association/U.S.A.
1145 South 7th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68502

John R. MacKenzie
Associate Professor and Director
Labor Studies Center
University of the District of Columbia
724 9th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

W. Dean Mason
Director
Education Training and Advocacy
Indiana Commission on the Aging and Aged
215 North Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

Vivian R. McCoy
Director
The Adult Life Resource Center
Division of Continuing Education
University of Kansas
3017 Harvard Road
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Howard Y. McClusky
Professor of Education and Faculty Associate
Institute of Gerontology
University of Michigan
School of Education
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109

Priscilla McCutcheon
Program Associate
Senior Center Humanities Program
National Council on the Aging
1828 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Donna McDowell
Acting Director
State Bureau of Aging
Division of Community Services
Department of Health and Social Services
One West Wilson Street, Room#453
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Bruce Millen
Executive Assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary for International Affairs
United States Department of Labor
200 Constituition Avenue,N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

Robert C. Mitchell
Program Manager
Pre-Retirement Planning
Xerox Corporation
Corporate Education and Training
International Center for Training and Management Development
Route 7
Leesburg, Virginia 22075

Harry R. Moody
Director of Academic Affairs
Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College
440 East 26th Street
New York, New York 10010

Richard Peterson
Senior Research Psychologist
Educational Testing Service
Berkeley, California 94704

Robert Lewis Piper
Dean
Continuing Studies and Special Programs
Southeastern Massachusetts University
North Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02747

Mary F. Power
Coordinator
Reference Services
National Gerontology Resource Center
National Retired Teachers Association-American Association of Retired Persons
1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20049

Pauline K. Ragan
Director
National Policy Center on Employment and Retirement
Andrus Gerontology Center
University of Southern California
University Park
Los Angeles, California 90007

Mary F. Sanchez
Education Specialist
Institute of Lifetime Learning
National Retired Teachers Association-American Association of Retired Persons
1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20049

James R. Sheffield
Project Director
Technology Adaptation and the Aging
Population Resource Center
622 3rd Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Barbara B. Spencer
Assistant Professor of Adult and Continuing Education
Associate Director
Center for Adult Education
Teachers College
Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York, New York 10027

John Stagg
Education Director
Graphic Arts International Union
1900 L Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

John J. Sullivan
Director
Educational Development
American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle
Washington, D.C. 20036

Sean Sweeney
Staff
Administration on Aging
United States Department of Health and Human Services
North Building, Room#4654
330 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Sandra Timmermann
Head
Institute of Lifetime Learning
National Retired Teachers Association-American Association of Retired Persons
1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20049

Paul Tremper
Director
National Community Education Association
1030 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Eugene Verdu
Director
Programs for Older Persons
Belleville Area College
201 North Church Street
Belleville, Illinois 62221

Ruth Weinstock
Vice President
Educational Facilities Laboratories
Academy for Educational Development
680 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10019

Florence Wesselius
Assistant Director
Wisconsin Association for Adult and Continuing Education
Gateway Technical Institute
1001 South Main Street
Racine, Wisconsin 53403

Robert Zager
Vice President for Policy Studies
Work In American Institute, Inc.
700 White Plains Road
Scarsdale, New York 10583